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NEWS RELEASE

Bakken Museum Honored with Leading Edge Award From Association of Science-Technology Centers

The Bakken Museum was honored by the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) with the 2009 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award for Visitor Experience for its Science Assets-based School Partnership program on October 31 in Fort Worth, Texas. The 'Edgie' recognizes extraordinary accomplishments that not only enhance the performance of the institution, but also significantly advance the mission of science-technology centers and museums.

The Bakken's Museum's mission is to inspire a passion for science but many children don't think science relates to them—particularly girls, students of color and students of poverty. Because science and technology are rapidly changing the twenty-first century world in which today's students live and work, The Bakken developed the groundbreaking Science Assets-based School Partnership program in collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Schools to change how students think about and approach science.

The program successfully builds upon children's creativity to help them develop confidence, receive support and understand that science is a meaningful part of their daily life. A team of Bakken educators visit the classroom, actively involving students in creative thinking and problem solving. As part of the program, children are introduced to 'People of Science' who help bring science to life in the classroom—such as a food scientist from General Mills whose job includes tasting cookies and an engineer from Medtronic who uses Silly Putty to demonstrate his work with polymers.

The School Partnership program also includes a professional development component. Participating teachers report increased confidence in teaching science. Positive outcomes have led to expansion of the program which will serve 2,700 district fourth graders and their teachers through 2011.

"The Bakken is honored to receive this national recognition," said Kelly Finnerty, Deputy Director for Programs for The Bakken Museum. "We are grateful to our educational partners at Minneapolis Public Schools and our community funders at the Bush Foundation, Medtronic and Boston Scientific for their support in building the Science Assets of every Minneapolis public school fourth grader."

About The Bakken Museum

The Bakken Museum was founded in 1975 by Earl Bakken, a Minneapolis native who discovered his passion for science at an early age. He was eight years old when he saw the film *Frankenstein* at a local theater, and watched in amazement as Dr. Frankenstein used science and electricity to bring the monster to life. The movie inspired him to conduct his own experiments with electricity in the basement workshop of his childhood home. Bakken went on to study electrical engineering at the University of Minnesota and in 1949, cofounded Medtronic with his brother-in-law. In 1957, he developed the first wearable, external, battery-powered pacemaker.

As he was becoming a pioneer in the medical device industry, Bakken also began collecting early medical equipment and books on therapeutic uses of electricity. The collections were housed at Medtronic and grew to become the world's only library and museum devoted primarily to medical electricity. The *West Winds* mansion was acquired in 1976 and the collections were moved there a few years later. They now number approximately 11,000 books, journals and manuscripts, and 2,000 historic scientific and medical instruments. Researchers from around the world visit to study the collections.

Visitors to The Bakken Museum enjoy dozens of exhibits that bring together artifacts from the collections and interactive experiences, while providing learners of every age the opportunity to explore the history and nature of electricity and magnetism. The museum's educational programs inspire kids of all ages to discover the passion of invention.

The Bakken Museum is at the corner of West Calhoun Parkway and 36th Street on the west shore of Lake Calhoun. Free parking is available in The Bakken's lot. For more information, visit www.TheBakken.org or call 612-926-3878.

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